

PATRICE

Album: FREE-PATRI-ATION

Label: Supow / Urban / Universal

Release date: May 26, 2008

Rewind: The release of his documentary DVD, *Raw & Uncut*, in 2006 marked "the end of an era", as PATRICE says today. What followed counts among the most important chapters in PATRICE's musical and personal development. Following three internationally successful albums and tours of truly biblical dimensions, PATRICE has found himself again, opening doors which have liberated him on a grand scale, and his fourth studio album, *FREE-PATRI-ATION*, allows his audience to share this newly found freedom for the first time.

Since the very early days of his career, PATRICE has been the type of universal musician who resents being restricted to specific pigeonholes; just feeling that people expected certain things from him used to cause spontaneous tensions. These days, he looks back with amusement on ideas like releasing a blues album just to defy all expectations, and has to laugh just talking about that episode. He is enjoying a new kind of casualness and self-awareness, and part of his current serenity is based on this self-awareness, which he earned himself in the course of the ten years since the release of his legendary debut EP, "Lions". You could say that PATRICE has arrived at last - but somebody like him never arrives anywhere without having a new destination in mind.

FREE-PATRI-ATION confirms on the one hand that PATRICE doesn't have to prove anything; he has already found his true voice. And on the other hand, his new songs leave no doubt that he is determined to surpass himself again and again in the future.

"I can only say that I am at a different place, and I feel much better, also in terms of my music," PATRICE describes those basic changes, pointing out a thoroughly positive development in terms of the album's production: "In Commissioner Gordon, I have found somebody who really is a good friend, and it was great fun to record the album with him. I always felt that he understood me completely."

Commissioner Gordon has been in the music industry for more than 25 years. He received one of three Grammys for his "The Miseducation Of Lauryn Hill" mix. Gordon has worked with the likes of KRS-One and the Marley family, and with artists such as Alicia Keys, Joss Stone and Amy Winehouse. The man has seen and heard it all, yet he goes into raptures on the subject of Patrice:

"He's a great songwriter, and we get on really well. That's the most important thing. When you want to create music, there's got to be the right feel between the people involved. Before you can talk about a successful album, the connection between the people who want to create music together is crucial. Only if the chemistry and the connection between them are right, can they create good music. Patrice and I connected ..."

PATRICE agrees, stressing to which extent the album was influenced by the recording situation at the Commissioner's studio in New Jersey. "Especially when we were not recording, the conversations we had, our discussions and how they left their mark on the lyrics I wrote - somehow it was all very real, had more relevance to what is currently going, was very immediate ..."

Still *FREE-PATRI-ATION* is more than the testament of an unusual cooperation which has turned into a friendship. As Commissioner Gordon hinted, this is the kind of collaboration that produces successful albums - if not necessarily in financial terms. Away from commercial considerations, for the artist this kind of success is based on a feeling of inner satisfaction - which is a little like a homecoming.

And so, the ambiguous title amplifies that overtone of returning home. FREE-PATRI-ATION includes a number of different allusions. Freetown in Sierra Leone, his father's native city, which was founded by liberated slaves, is just as much present in the title as "(re)patriation", the liberation and return of former slaves; and last but not least there's an element of a self-empowered PATRICE finding his very own home country. Everything has come together. Very much in the same way as everything has come together in his music.

And so it is also that specific quality of the new PATRICE which allows him to bring things together in a way that creates a unit, combining classic Jamaican riddims with African 6/8 time elements, a classic folk paraphrasing meeting funk guitars.

"I was looking for a constant element in all the musical genres that I like, and I found it in the groove," PATRICE explains this fusion, and at last he realises the secret is disclosed, and with an almost embarrassed air, he confesses:

"I feel that I've never been better at mixing different styles, letting the result sound as if it was no mix but a style in itself."

This we can easily believe - FREE-PATRI-ATION has the style of personal declaration of independence - no style could be more individual.

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